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UNCLAS VATICAN 004539

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EUR/WE (MENNUITI), NEA/NGA, NEA/PPD

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SUBJECT: POPE WELCOMES IRAQ'S APPARENT OPENNESS TO NEW ARMS INSPECTIONS

1. POPE JOHN PAUL II ENDED HIS WEEKLY GENERAL AUDIENCE SEPTEMBER 18 BY WELCOMING IRAQ'S APPARENT ACCEPTANCE OF UN ARMS INSPECTIONS AS POTENTIALLY A STEP BACK FROM WAR. THE VATICAN'S PRESS OFFICE SLUGGED THE PAPAL STATEMENT IN ITS DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN AS "POPE MAKES APPEAL FOR PEACE." TEXT OF THE POPE'S STATEMENT FOLLOWS:

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2. BEGIN TEXT. "IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, AFTER THE WINDS OF WAR THREATENED TO UPSET THE ENTIRE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST, I HAVE RECEIVED THE GOOD NEWS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF IRAQ'S COLLABORATION ONCE AGAIN WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. I URGE YOU TO CONTINUE TO PRAY THAT THE LORD ENLIGHTENS THE LEADERS OF NATIONS, OPENS US AND SUSTAINS ATTITUDES OF GOOD WILL AND LEADS HUMANITY, AFFLICTED BY SO MANY EVILS, TOWARD COEXISTENCE FREE FROM WAR AND VIOLENCE." END TEXT.

NICHOLSON

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